



**Farmington River Watershed Association, Inc.**

749 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, CT 06070

(860) 658-4442 Fax (860) 651-7519 [www.frwa.org](http://www.frwa.org)

February 15, 2017

**Opposition to De-funding and Eliminating the Council on Environmental Quality**

To CoChairs Formica, Osten, and Walker, and Members of the Appropriations Committee:

On behalf of the Farmington River Watershed Association (FRWA), I am submitting comments strongly opposing both the elimination of state budget funds for the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), and the elimination of CEQ itself in Governor's H.B. 7051.

FRWA is a private, non-profit environmental organization dedicated to preserving, protecting, and restoring the Farmington River and its watershed land through education, research, stewardship, and advocacy. Like many such organizations, we have a small staff and budget but manage to be effective through partnerships, networking, good communications, and leveraging of resources. For our organization and many others, CEQ is an important resource and a catalyst for positive action. It provides

- Alerts about proposals and other actions involving DEEP review, which our organization can pass on, or comment upon. Thus CEQ enhances the transparency and accessibility of the environmental review process.
- Summary documents on environmental issues that are not available in any other way; including CEQ's review of the state of Connecticut's environment. These are extremely useful for informing stakeholders and legislators.
- A forum for citizens or organizations to bring environmental concerns to the attention of DEEP so they can be handled promptly and internally.
- A watchdog service to evaluate and improve the performance of CT DEEP.
- Knowledge and input from a dedicated and qualified Board, who serve at no cost to the state.

By enabling conservation and environmental organizations—and DEEP-- to work more efficiently and effectively across the state, CEQ leverages non-state resources for environmental protection and stewardship. Eliminating it would save a mere \$174,000, and incur a larger cost as we all lose the benefit of its good work. We very strongly urge you to restore funding for CEQ in the proposed budget, and to oppose the elimination of CEQ.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Eileen Fielding". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Eileen Fielding  
Executive Director